342 177 Of course, like all European houses in the region under discussion, these buildings are, unfortunately, made of mud bricks, but is that not the rule in French West Africa?

342 In the homes of those two ministers of the emperor who are most advanced, the reception rooms are arranged in such a way that callers benefit from a constant flow of fresh air through large openings. During periods of extreme heat, a punkah operated [417] by a sogoné in the middle [216] of the room provides air for the panting visitors. The wall, always whitewashed with kaolin, bears an [353] an advertisement or two, the picture of an important chief, or perhaps some family photographs, which enliven the apartments a bit. All of this shows a real anxiety on the part of the chiefs to develop along the lines of progress and civilization.

In recent years, some of the notables at Ouagadougou have built houses with clay roofs, not so much to live in as to safeguard their family valuables against fire and theft.

Finally, it should be noted that custom requires every new naba for the first three years of his reign to live in songodo, straw huts, which will be described later. Only then may he build with clay.

Dwellings of Mossi Subjects

342 787 Temporary dwelling. Before building his conjugal hut, the young man consults a soothsayer in order to make sure that the site chosen is not haunted by evil spirits and that he will have happiness and good fortune if he lives there.

342 787 Even if the soothsayer finds nothing especially alarming about the site, he always orders a chicken or other animal to be sacrificed or alms to be given. The young man arranges with the village elder [217] or, if he is a [Nioniosse], with the Tingsoba (from tenga "earth," and soba, "master"), to sacrifice the victim.

The Tingsoba goes to the site and calls for two small gourds which contain ordinary water and water mixed with flour, respectively. He invokes all his ancestors and pours the water on the ground, praying God to accept it for His wife, Tinga, who is absorbing it. Then he kills the chicken, saying: "On -- on,